

WORDS HAVE POWER!

A lesson in building moral leadership for Grades 6-8

Jaysa is a young girl from Bridgeport, Connecticut who speaks out at public hearings and helps catalyze the opposition to the coal-fired power plant that is causing her asthma. She addresses the environmental injustices in her community and reflects on the power a single voice can have on creating positive change. In this lesson, educators have the opportunity to explore how pollution disproportionately affects low-income communities and how its members can empower themselves to take a stand.



“It’s a lot more powerful when you talk from the heart.”

Jaysa’s courage to speak out can be explored through Young Voices for the Planet’s “A.C.T.I.O.N” plan. This lesson prompts students to use a graphic organizer to analyze Jaysa actions and discuss them with peers. By using the gallery walk technique, students have the opportunity to share their ideas in small groups and reflect on how they can find the courage to act on issues on their own communities. On the next page, educators will find a detailed lesson plan which includes standards, learning objectives, essential questions, and step-by-step instructions needed to bring this activity to life.

Link to film: www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com/youth-climate-videos/words-have-power/

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Lesson Plan Instructions

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

What gives us the courage to act?



OBJECTIVES:

Students will analyze strategies used to resolve conflicts in their community.

Students will determine the central ideas of a short film by completing a graphic organizer.

Students will evaluate methods of youth civic engagement through discussion with peers.

Students will interpret their perspectives on youth activism in the face of a potential conflict.

DIRECTIONS (suggested lesson time approx. 1 hr.)

1. Think-pair-share: Project this question on the board: "Think of a time you had to do something that scared you. What gave you the courage to act?" Allow students a few minutes to write answer independently, have them pair with person next to them to discuss, then share out as a class.

2. Show film with handout: Give hand out, review A.C.T.I.O.N acronym, have students fill in graphic organizer as they watch. Pause intermittently, allow time for students to write, re-visit clips if needed.

3. Gallery Walk: Display 6 large posters around the room. Break students into small groups and assign each group to start at one of the stations. Each poster will have one letter of the A.C.T.I.O.N acronym, with a question written at the top (see student handout for each letter's question). Set a timer for approximately 3-4 minutes, and have groups work together to write their responses from their graphic organizers on each poster. It helps if each group is assigned a different color. After each group has visited each station, have them return to their seats.

4. Discussion: Bring each poster to the front of the class to display in a line. Go through each letter and prompt students to share their responses (*Suggestion: Show the film again, asking students to look for anything they might have missed!*) provide feedback, write their answers on the board.

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Lesson Plan Instructions (continued)

5. Exit ticket: Prompt students to respond to this question to wrap up the lesson: "After viewing the film and analyzing Jaysa's actions, evaluate how Jaysa's A.C.T.I.O.N.s gave her the courage to act."

6. Extension opportunities: (a) Conduct an investigation on health hazards related to power plants and compare its uses with alternative energy sources:

(<https://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/tools-for-teachers>)

(b) Analyze environmental racism and identify trends through cartography:

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/analyzing-environmental-justice> (c) Examine stories of other young people fighting

environmental justice "ReGeneration: Young People Shaping Environmental Justice" - resource for defining Environmental Justice

www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/5548_ReGenReportEnvJustice.pdf

MATERIALS:

- Computer with internet connection, projector with A/V
- Large blank posters, sheets
- Graphic organizers
- Markers & other writing utensils
- Timer

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:

- For ELD students: Complete graphic organizer with a partner, provide transcript of film, provide sentence stems for entry/exit ticket and/or reflective essay.
- For Differentiated Instruction (DI): Allow students to move to each gallery station at own pace rather than on a timer, repeat question orally to students when monitoring stations, provide writing frames for extension essay.